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ABSTRACT

This overview of teacher inservice education in Sweden has been complied with particular focus on the role of teacher inservice education (INSET) within the school development context. The term INSET refers to short-cycle training inputs, which tend to be of a general nature, e.g., social development, working methods in the classroom or cooperation between teachers. This conspectus is based not only on research reports but also on reviews of various publications presented in this field within the major international joint bodies. A description is given of the functions of INSET in the Nordic countries--Finland, Denmark, and Norway as well as Sweden. A review of the literature on school develpoment research is presented, focusing on improvement efforts occurring at local school levels, not on those intended to span the entire school system. A discussion is presented of the role that action research has played in developing INSET within the framework of school improvement efforts. Following a discussion of conclusions from the research reports and literature review, some recommendations are made for possible new initiatives on the part of local schools as well as school staffs. Fifty-two references are included. (JD)

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IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

AND

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

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IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION AND SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Overview and soliloquy by Mats Ekholm

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1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

I have compiled the following conspectus of teacher INSET on behalf of the Educational Co-operation Steering Group of the Nordic Council of Ministers. In doing so I have attached particular importance to the role of teacher INSET in the school development context.

In Swedish there is a distinction between further education and in-service education for teachers. Further education comes after basic education and implies advance studies in a subject field of which the teacher already has quite considerable knowledge. It nearly always involves the teacher in a prolonged study programme, lasting, say, for six months or more.

The term INSET is usually reserved for more short-cycle training inputs which, moreover, tend to be of a more general nature, e.g. social development, working methods in the classroom or co-operation between teachers. In the present review I have confined my attention to INSET in the Swedish sense, thus leaving further education to one side.

This conspectus is based not only on research reports but also on reviews of various publications presented in this field within the major international joint bodies. The target group for the conspectus has comprised local and more central decision-makers and administrators in the education sector, as well as representatives of teacher INSET institutions throughout the Nordic area.

2. INSET IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

Teacher INSET has its appointed place in the school structures of the Nordic countries. In Finland, Norway and Sweden, for example, in-service days form part of teachers' normal duties during the school year. Teachers in Denmark sometimes convene for planning conferences which can be characterised in terms of both INSET and colloquies. Teachers in all five Nordic countries can undergo further education at post-secondary level, while retaining a substantial portion of their regular salary. Icelandic teachers are actually allowed a "sabbatical year" for education. The Danish Institute of Education has resources for about 200 "sabbatical years" in the form of temporary staffing resources. In the other countries, the sabbatical year system is mainly reserved for high-ranking university teachers.

In other countries, in-service education as an element of normal teaching service is by no means as axiomatic as in most of the Nordic countries. An overview compiled within the European Community (Blackburn and Moisan, 1986), for example, showed Denmark to be alone among the 12 member states in provinding teacher INSET during school hours. In many of the other states, INSET occupies non-teaching time e.g. evenings and weekends. This state of affairs is not confined to European states. It also applies to many American states (cf. Huberman and Miles, 1984)

Compulsory and voluntary participation

The INSET normally and continuously provided in Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden in the form of compulsory and regular inservice days is regarded in some countries as an extraordinary investment in personnel development. In-sercvice days, also known as conference or planning days, "belong" both to the employer (the State and municipal authorities) and to the individual school. INSET on in-service days is compulsory for teachers, regardless of whether the programme is organised by the employer or the school itself. Other INSET amenities are not compulsory in this way. Those arrangements are of a more voluntary nature, and they often involve teachers studying at a teacher training establishment or university. In recent decades, several of the Nordic countries have gone in for a more decentralised form of further education, with post-secondary courses taking place in the teacher's own municipalities or schools.

Central interested parties

In Finland, Norway and Sweden, teacher INSET has been more emphatically "State-owned" than in Denmark. Central messages, e.g. signals relating to school reforms of different kinds, have been transmitted through teachers' INSET. In-sevice days have served as mass media channel through which important central messages have been transmitted.

In Denmark, the Danish Institute of Education and its staff have for a long time occupied a leading and centralising position in Danish teacher INSET. In Iceland, a similar role has been played by the Reykjavik Institute of Education. The staffs at these establishments, however, have had extensive liberty in designing teacher INSET, with the result that they have exerted a special, autonomous influence on their national education systems.

Finland too has a central institution for teacher INSET, but with a different emphasis from Iceland and Denmark. It is the Heinola Course Institute which serves as a residential establishment for an array of centrally organised INSET courses with various emphases. In Sweden and Norway, this form of centralised teacher INSET is not attached to any particular institution. In both these countries, the various universities offer teachers the opportunity of further education in the region where they live and short-cycle INSET courses are organised on a temporary residential basis, e.g. at hotels or folk high schools.

School-based INSET

Both in the three countries where in-service days are compulsory and in Denmark, emphasis has in recent years come to be put on the importance of municipalities and schools themselves taking pains with the proper use of teachers' INSET time. Since the end of the 1970s, partly as a result of OECD co-operation on teacher INSET (Bolam, 1981), the importance has been emphasised of teacher INSET being based on deliberations within the local school (Bolam, 1980)

Historical background

INSET traditions among teachers in the Nordic countries can to a great extent be traced back to efforts by the teachers' own organisations to keep their members abreast of developments in the profession. Through the development of widespread elementary education, teachers in the relatively sparsely populated Nordic area came to be scattered over extensive geographical areas occupied by the agrarian population. Sweden, for example, already had a firmly establised tradition of in-service teacher education during the 19th century. Teachers from relatively extensive geographical areas were convened so as to experience professional identity and loyalty through the medium of in-service training.

By the time urbanisation got under way during the present century, the tradition of gathering together as a professional group was already firmly rooted in the teaching professions. Education authorities were not slow to take advantage of this tradition and intervene in the proceedings of these training days, exerting more and more control on their organisation and content. It was not until the introduction of comprehensive compulsory schooling in Norway, Finland and Sweden, however, that in-service days rose to their present number (for a description of the history of inservice days in Sweden, se Ekholm, 1987)

Heavy expenditure

The Nordic countries spend a great deal of money on teacher INSET, especially by comparison with other countries. In Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, between 1.5 and 2.5 percent of the working year and, accordingly, the same percentages of teachers' salary costs, are devoted to in-service day participation. In all these countries, and in Iceland as well, funds are earmarked for teachers' special in-service training at higher education establishments, teacher training institutions or during a sabbatical year. In the Nordic countries, the cost of teachers' participation in this type of INSET, e.g. travel expenses, salaries for temporary staff and living expenses, are usually borne by the employer. In other countries this arrangement is unusual (Blackburn and Moisan, 1987).

Greater Nordic uniformity

The development of INSET structure and of school development incentives in recent years has increased the structural uniformity of the Nordic countries. Denmark has for a long time now put a great deal of emphasis on a decentralised approach, showing very great confidence in the ability of individual teachers and, to some extent, individual schools to develop their own activities, and Sweden and Norway have followed suit. The basic prerequisite of a decentralised scheme of school development is for the indivudual school to draw up a teaching or working plan of its own. Schools in Denmark are required to draw up their own teaching plans by the 1975 Elementary Education Act. In Sweden, the 1980 Compulsory School Curriculum

made it the duty of compulsory school management districts to draw up local working plans of their own, and the same demand is made on Norwegian compulsory schools by the 1985 Standard Plan. It is interesting to note that the traditional differences in the degree of centralisation between the societies persist in that local working plans are stipulated in the centrally framed, nationwide currucula (Standard Plan and Compulsory School Curriculum respectively) of Norway and Sweden.

3. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

The concept of school development

School development is a concept which has been analysed and discussed both internationally and in Nordic literature (cf. Carlgren, 1986; Højrup, 1985; Sandström and Ekholm, 1984). There are many definitions and the differences between them are frequently microscopic. The understanding of school development is held together above all by the fact that school and its activities are improved by actions being taken within them. Improvements often consist in schools coming closer to the objectives defines for their activities. Some studies are dominated by a concern to understand the way in which this improvement has proceeded over a considerable period without schools receiving any particular assistance from outside. Sometimes - and most often, the main concern is that of the systematic studies with understanding how the improvement came about in connection with schools receiving extraordinary assistance of some kind.

In this review of literature I have employed a somewhat limited definition of school improvements, taken from an OECD work forming part of the ISIP project[1]. In one of the many works presented there on the subject of school devolpment/improvement, it is observerd that school development/improvement comprises "a systematic, supportive effort to change the conditions attaching to pupils' learning and related conditions at one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of achieving educational goals more efficiently" (Miles and Ekholm 1985).

By making this definition the starting point of my review of the literature, I have caused attention to focus on improvement efforts occurring at local school level, not on those intended to span the entire school system. INSET measures sometimes occupy a prominent position in these studies, while in others they are hardly referred to at all. I have also concentrated more on studies in which school development work has tended to be of a planned nature than on deveopment work which "just happened". I have tried to take in all Nordic research, but there is a certain bias in favour of Swedish studies.

[1] ISIP is short for International School Improvement Project.

Nordic school research

Research into school development is fairly assiduous in the Nordic countries, partly because researchers have played an active part in reforming the national school systems. Often, though, the work of the school researchers has concentrated on changes in the school system, as opposed to the changes undergone by individual schools. In Dalin's (1973) studies for the OECD/ CERI at the beginning of the 1970s, attention was drawn to the need for research into the development of school management districts and individual schools. Nearly fifteen years later, however, in a book on school development, Dalin (1987) finds, on examining Scandinavian research into school development, that relatively few studies of this kind have been undertaken. Part of the reason is that school research is still very much concerned either with a systematic perspective or with a very close classroom perspective.

Parallel, however, to the development in the Nordic countries of an increasingly decentralised school structure, more and more studies have been made of the way in which individual schools respond to demands for change or themselves develop new solutions. Two research strategies predominate among the studies in which the school development process has been followed at local level and related, among other things, to teacher education inputs. The researchers have chosen to employ action research, i.e. to take part themselves in the attempts to change the schools which they have studied. They have also concentrated on understanding the processes occurring, thereby confining their observations to what has happened while it has been happening or subsequently. Evaluative studies of different kinds predominate here.

Action research

In an early Danish study within this tradition, Illeris (1973) and his associates helped to introduce new teaching patterns. These were above all concerned with using the large group for other purposes than those of pure information transmission. Democratic decision-making became an element which really came to constitute direct in-service education for teachers at the training establishment where the development work took place. Several other Danish studies have followed the same tradition of researchers and school staff together achieving and describing the development of individual schools (cf. Bjerg (1976), Skyum-Nielsen (1985 and 1987)).

These studies make it abundantly clear that teacher INSET can very well take the form of processes of change, surveys or experiments, and at the same time be integrated with all aspects of normal work, such as planning, implementation and follow-up. These studies also demonstrate the great importance of the work of improvement "belonging" to the school staff themselves, if it is to be converted into new routines. Quite a lot of the conclusions which it has been possible to draw from these studies

with a view to the in-service education and further development of teachers in the direct exercise of their profession have been utilised by the staff of the Danish Institute of Education. Above all, a school-based INSET scheme has been introduced in which surveys and improvement actions are regarded as specific elements of teacher development (cf. Ploug-Olsen 1981, Skolen på Islands Brygge, 1985).

A couple of Norwegian studies have been undertaken in the same research tradition. Under the Lofoten Project, Högmo, Solstad and Tiller (1981) worked together with school staff and local inhabitants to adapt the content of compulsory school to the local community and its requirements. In addition to bringing about discussions of educational ideology, they also develop local teaching materials and modified teaching practices in which the conditions of the local community came to be used more in the eduation of young citizens. Their action strategy has spread to many other communities, both in Norway (Raaen, 1984) and in Sweden (Johansson, 1985). These studies show that teacher INSET sometimes results from active problem-solving and sometimes from an undertaking to create working material and teaching materials with a more immediate purpose than that of complying with a remotely produced curriculum. Involvement in the local environment and the situation of the individual school there is a source of enlightenment to the teaching profession.

Högmo (1985) draws a number of conclusions from work on the Lofoten Project concerning a couple of important preconditions for INSET and school development efforts leaving their imprint on teachers' thinking habits. He finds that teachers need above all to drive satisfaction from activities aimed at expanding their own professional responsibilities. In many teachers' minds, those responsibilities are defined as their own teaching of the pupils. If teachers fail to find this satisfaction in an experimental project or an INSET scheme, their interest and involovement will fade. Högsmo also points out that participation in an intensive experimental scheme can give teachers extra rewards over and above the purely professional reward of co-operative participation. The satisfaction derived by teachers from this extra reward also seems to have an important bearing on the success of an INSET venture, not least because teachers are faced with constant demands for co-operation, at the same time as their working situation has little in the way of co-operative tradition.

Studies of successful development experiments

Similar conclusions about the way in which teachers broaden their knowledge can be drawn from the amply documented experimental activities conducted at Öckerö, near Göteborg, in the mid- and late 1970s (Rapp, 1979). At Bratteberg School, studies at senior level were re-organised in such a way as to allow more experimental teaching, more independent investigative work by the pupils, while at the same time making different demands on cooperation between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. Teachers learned by actively participating in the

improvement and designing it themselves. Axén and Wahlström (1986) describe similar experience from a similar restructuring of another Swedish compulsory school. This school took part, between 1980 and 1985, in a joint Nordic scheme (Vasström, 1985) in which 13 other schools also formed part of a network. Experience from development activities at these schools also confirms another observation concerning the efficiency with which viable teacher INSET should be organised. In the Nordic school development network, the individual schools were required, at regular intervals to compile written reports on what they had achieved. Those reports have been synthesised (Ekholm 1986). By being forced to formulate progress at their own school, staff had occasion to ponder what they had learned and, in this way, what they had learned became more visible and more easily retainable than would be the case with inarticulate, en-passant learning.

Similar experience emerges from the pro-development schools' reports compiled by Berg, Larsson and Wallin (1980). In this study it was found that educational goals did relatively little to influence school activities. Instead, the emphasis of activities was determines by the opinions of the school staff themselves concerning their school's available scope for action. At the same time this study shows the importance of schools being capable of utilising the INSET resources available. Several of the schools in the study also show that they were encouraged by outside support, a finding which tallies closely with the testimony of the fourteen Nordic schools (Ekholm,1986).

In experiments involving the collective direction of compulsory schools, Tjeldvoll (1982) has reported that staff develop a different attitude to the management function in school and to their own work, expecially as regards co-operation with colleagues, when they are forced to assume active responsibility for the management of their own locel organisation. The lessons learned from this action project suggest that the opportunity of discharging other than purely teaching duties at school can be an admirable form of teacher INSET.

Effects of participation in experimental activities

In a Swedish "meta-study" (Gustafson et al., 1985) of the reactions of school staff to participatin in action research organised by university staff and in experimental work organised by their own local education authority, it is apparent that teachers derive stimulus from participation. In this study, two relatively distinct development strategies employed in the same school management districts were evaluated. One strategy implied formalised co-operation and agreements on different undertakings, coupled with the use of a firm, well-structured working method. The other strategy made little use of formalised co-operation;co-operation between experimental leaders and teachers was left to materialise when the needs became apparent, and leadership was found to be a good deal more exploratory, with teachers being invited to contribute their knowledge in a different manner from the first strategy.

The lessons from this study show that both strategies were successful, but at the same time the study makes it clear that success hinged to a great extent on the compatibility of strategy with the in-house culture of the local school. Without such compatibility, experimental activities left little trace. This observation has also been presented by Nielsen (1983) theorising on the different degrees of "maturity" of different schools for improving their activities and the importance, in teacher INSET, of taking into account the preparedness of a school for change. Hall and Loucks (1978) have constructed a special diagnostic instrument for ascertaining teachers' involvement in their own professional education as a foundation for the planning of INSET measures. This can be of some use, as subsequent evaluation of the use of the instrument have shown (Hord and Loucks, 1980).

Evaluation of in-service days

There have been numerous evaluations of in-service days the backbone of INSET strategy in Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish schools. Often these evaluations consist mainly in the distribution of a simple questionnaire form at the end of an in-service day. The main purpose at this time of evaluation is to give the arrangers feedback on its content and, possibly, the teachers' opinions of the working procedures adopted. In my review of literature, I have not found any more systematic reviews of what these rapid evaluations have to tell us about the in-service day system.

One of the few more systematic studies of in-service days was undertaken in Sweden in the early 1970s. Eklund (1974) and his co-workers then examined the in-service day experiences of a larger group of teachers. A considerable number of questions were addressed to more than 600 teachers, randomly selected from Swedish compulsory schools. In this study the teachers gave in-service days a relatively poor press. Roughly two-thirds of them felt that they had adequate opportunity of playing an active part in the in-service day proceedings, but at the same time nearly six out of ten felt that in-service day activities had no connection with their own practical situation. Seven out of ten felt that in-service day activities did not encourage them to take part in subsequent in-service education, and six out of ten felt that work on in-service days had not given them any greater feeling of security in their own professional practice. At the beginning of the 1970s about three out of every four of the randomly selected teachers stated that they had not had any opportunity of influencing the planning or content of in-service days.

Longitudinal studies of schools

In a long intensive study of three Swedish school management districts which took place between 1977 and 1981, and in which researchers continuously spent about one-third of their working time in each of the districts concerned, it was found that improvement effects almost completely failed to materialise

(Sandström and Ekholm, 1984). Among other things the researchers found that various INSET inputs - including twenty in-service days, participation in staff team training and participation in school management training - had between them very small effects, due to the different activities not being in any way co-ordinated or systematised. The in-service days, for example, did not conform to any long-range plan and were above all concerned with temporary subjects cropping up during the different school years. Far more time on these days was devoted to information and a species of entertainment than to studies and to genuine in-service education .

A Swedish longitudinal study of compulsory school management districts yielded equally discouraging results concerning the effects of continuous in-service days. This study (Ekholm, 1984) included an investigation of teachers' attitudes to and use of different working methods in compulsory school, at a ten-year interval (1969 - 1979) in twelve compulsory school management districts. The fifty in-service days which had been held during these ten years in each of the school management districts left minimal traces in the teachers' attitudes to teaching. During the in-sercive days and using many other conditioning factors, e.g. a new curriculum and summer courses, efforts were made in the Swedish schools to induce teachers to employ more variable working methods with regard to pupils' learning. Ten years later, assessments of everyday life in schools by both pupils and teachers showed that the same run-of-the-mill teaching patterns were still being applied. In these schools as well, in-service day activities did not follow much of a long-term plan and the activities themselves involved little in the way of active investigation or genuine study. For the most part, information and ideas were dished up to teachers lacking any previous involvement in the matter.

Utilisation of financial support

In 1982 Sweden introduced a new system of teacher INSET and local school development incentives. Every school receives a direct State grant which has to be deployed in such a way that roughly SEK 1,200/teacher and year are devoted to further education of teachers and about SEK 700/teacher and year to local development work. Studying this new Swedish system, Henricsson (1984) finds that a very large proportion of the funds intended mainly to finance collective inputs of the individual school are used primarily for purchasing what can be termed further education for teachers.

Alexandersson and Öhlund (1986) have also studied the new system of incentives from the viewpoints of both teachers and school management during its early implementation. In their studies they found that head teachers were more concerned with the way in which INSET fitted in with purposes of school improvement, while teachers more often found the connection between INSET and local school development to be rather vague. To many teachers, INSET meant improving their own knowledge. To a minority, INSET participation meant learning for school, their task being to pass on what they had learned to colleagues

in their own school. Alexandersson and Öhlund found that teachers' motives for taking part in INSET congregated round two poles. One of these, they maintain, emanates from an innovative attitude on the part of the teacher, while the other emanates from a compensatory attitude. A teacher whose INSET participation is based on an innovative attitude looks for knowledge which will help him to influence and change school development. The teacher with a compensatory attitude is more concerned with catching up, through INSET, with changes in the focus or organisation of school that have already been decided on.

Evaluation of other INSET measures

Studies of the normal flow of INSET are few in number compared with those of special ventures to which it has been decided to draw attention by means of more systematic evaluation. Bugge (1981) evaluated an INSET scheme for Danish religious education teachers both by putting questions to the teachers themselves and by measuring their pupils. He found that the INSET had made an impression on the teachers taking part in it and that they professed themselves ready to employ wider teaching methods in pursuit of the objectives defined for a limited section of the syllabus. The changes undertaken by the teachers made little difference to the pupils' learning. But Bugge's study confirms the importance of teachers themselves taking part in the planning of their own INSET.

This lesson is corroborated by other Danish studies of the use of study circle methodology (Ploug-Olsen, 1981). The change of emphasis made by the Danish Institute of Education in its range of INSET activities, in favour of more school-based study circles conducted by the teachers themselves, has, Ploug-Olsen (1985) maintains, established a platform on which teachers at the individual school can continue with development work and improvements to teaching in their schools.

Team INSET

It has in various connections become common practice since the beginning of the 1970s to organise team training of various kinds for school, dissemination what they have learned on the course. Quite a few studies have now been made of the effects of this INSET strategy.

Njerve (1983) in Norway and Lander (1985) in Sweden have both evaluated the effects of relatively comprehensive team training programmes aimed at inducing the members of the team from the school, on completion of an INSET period, to induce their colleagues at the same school to improve their activities. Njerve's study referred to the Environment and Management Project, Lander's to INSET on the subject of Social Development in Schools. Carlberg (1984) has studied Swedish staff team training in which between 10 and 15 people formed school teams and took part in a ten-day INSET programme spread out over one school year, with a view to improving their schools. Lander and

Nylén (1987) have studied the application of the team INSET strategy at a number of upper secondary schools in Sweden. Larsson (1986) has studied the way in which facilita-programme preparing them to act as development agents on their home ground.

Most of the studies show that it is difficult for the lessons learned in one's own INSET to be translated to the home school. The same observation has been made in international studies (Hameyer, 1984). At the same time the participants point out that they have experienced a growth of co-operation with their colleagues as a result of the INSET. The studies also point to the importance of school management actively taking part in efforts to bring about improving activities at the individual school. This finding is confirmed by American and international studies (Edelfelt, 1983; Huberman and Miles, 1984; van Velzen et al.,1985)

Local development areas

For many years, Sweden tested a school development strategy whereby municipalities and the State provided equal measures of financial support for local development activities in what could be variously termed development blocks or local development areas. This strategy involved a variety of INSET activities, above all in the form of planned, systematic experimentation conducted by teachers themselves. The underlying idea of these local development areas was for the lessons learned by the teachers conducting the experiments to be communicated to other teachers, both in the participating municipalities and further afield. Lindblad (1982) finds, in a review of experience from the activities, that this purpose cannot really be said to have been achieved. The lessons learned remained with the active teachers. Others are seldom apprised of them, due both to inferior channels of distribution and to lack of commitment on those who have not actually been involved in the experimentation.

A five-year study of normal development

In a study of five years' normal education development in 35 Swedish compulsory school districts up and down the country, Ekholm, Fransson and Lander (1987) find that relatively comprehensive INSET and developmental inputs can have effects in numerous fields of school life, while leaving no mark at all elsewhere. Three systematic situation appraisals in each of the 35 school management districts were undertaken in 1980, 1982 and 1985.

The very many events occurring during this five-year period in the life of the schools concerned included the following:

- The consequences were taken of a wider parliamentary reform of education (the SIA reform).
- A new curriculum (Lgr 80) was introduced which among other things included compilation of an independent local working plan, supported by an extra implementation grant equalling some SEK 30,000-40,000/year for four years.

- A new grant for teachers' further education and local school development, equalling about SEK 2,000/teacher and year, was introduced as from 1982.
- A total of 25 in-service days were held.
- Head teachers of the schools took part in the two-year scheme of school management training.
- About 15 people and several of the schools took part in a centrally organised one-year scheme of staff team training.

As a result of this comprehensive support for schools, it was found that, after five years, school managements were progressively more capable of working on more collective lines, at the same time as the great majority of schools had acquired teachers who had switched from an individualised planning pattern to a more collective approach. Pupils were given progressively greater influence through the medium of class committees. In 34 of the 35 school management districts studied, there was still a local working plan in 1985. Most of the districts, however, were not using their local plans; these had been left on the shelf.

At the same time, the five-year study showed that there were other aspects of their working patterns which school staff were not prepared to alter. Although school management and participants in staff teams undergoing the one-year INSET had encountered many different models for the evaluation of work by adults and activities in their own schools, this knowledge was not found to be widely utilised. Evaluation of adults' work inputs tended to be avoided rather than tested. During the period in question, schools were faced with the demand of devising more variable working methods for the actual business of teaching and quite a few alternative working procedures for investigation and collective work were presented to school staff during their own INSET. Only minimal traces of this could be seen, however, at the schools by the end of the five-year period. Instead they chose to continue working along the old familiar lines already existing when the period began.

The five-year study showed once again that different INSET measures in Swedish schools ar co-ordinated badly or not at all and that in-service days are arranged without reference to any long-term, systematic plan.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The content of school development

In the literature on which I have based this study, both INSET and school devolopment vary in content. Examples can be found of everything from improvements made to parts of the teaching process for teachers of individual subjects to more thoroughgoing improvements in the activities of entire schools. The content of teachers' INSET hinges to a great extent on changes of fashion, which among other things has been one of the weaknesses of INSET. Many in-service days have been devoted to

fictitious needs for improvement aroused by the sudden descent of news media or by debates which have flared up temporarily without focusing properly on the fundamental problems of schools.

One of the most recently published and more systematic overviews of the type of content to be found in teacher INSET is included in Blackburn's and Moison's (1986) study of INSET in the European Committee countries. The main priority fields for teacher INSET in these countries were use of information technology, teaching methodology, special teaching, immigrant education, school leadership, technical and vocational INSET for upper secondary school teachers, further teacher education, especially in languages and science subjects, and reform-related INSET. The observations made in the twelve EEC countries seem familiar with reference to the INSET in demand in the Nordic countries. Top priorities with us, however, also include a couple of other INSET themes: co-operation practice and a deeper knowledge of democratic processes.

The initiators

The content of INSET is determined by different traditions in our different countries. The main initiatives come from three quarters: employers, INSET agencies and schools themselves. Employsers, i.e. the State or municipality, offer schools INSET or school development support. The State or municipality sometimes requires schools to take part in INSET or improvement work. One strategy is successful in one country, another in another country, above all because school staff differ in their familiarity with and their acceptance of initiatives from the centre of the school system. Participation in a central reform of the school system comes naturally in a Swedish school but may seem very odd in a Danish school.

Employers' initiatives

Blackburn and Moisan (1986) find that employers often use three distinct forms of INSET to encourage improvements in school. Sometimes they invest in a "cascade model" which begins by training a small group of people who, in the second stage, are given the task of training other teachers on the same lines as they themselves have been trained. Studies by Njerve (1983), Lander (1985) and others are examples of evaluations of this strategy. Employers also arrange in-service days or INSET conferences on a crash basis, in order to announce changes or required improvements while at the same time issuing instructions on how these are to be achieved. The third form of INSET involves employers investing INSET resources in one or two specialised staff categories, e.g. head teachers or special teachers, to equip them for more exacting duties.

Initiatives from INSET agencies

INSET and school development can also occur at the initiative of staff belonging to school auxiliary forces, i.e. INSET

specialists or researchers at universities, university colleges, county education committees or municipal education authorities. It is important for these groups of officers to establish their raison d'être, and they cannot wait for schools to ask for help. They are forced to market their knowledge, partly by taking the initiative in school development and INSET. In addition to opening direct joint developmental projects together with individual schools, these officers can organise courses of varying duration and offer them to schools after having listened, to a greater or less extent, for the needs which schools may conceivably have. It is often these groups which organise summer courses for teachers and take charge of the further education undergone by teachers during their sabbitical years.

In Denmark, through the Danish Institute of Education, and in Sweden and Norway, through the universities and teacher education establishments there, this type of INSET is a very common feature in the Nordic countries. In Sweden a free market for teacher INSET jas developed as a result of the re-organisation, in 1982, of the system of financial support for subsequent teacher education. The Swedish universities and university colleges offer municipal authorities INSET packages which are sometimes "customised" to suit local preferences and sometimes more a reflection of the employment needs of the higher education establishments themselves. In a system where initiatives from the INSET agencies are allowed to predominate in the process of improvement, emphases will depend on the assessments made by responsible persons in this quarter.

School initiatives

Many of the initiatives for improvements come from local schools themselves. Improvement procedures can assume various guises. A school may set up working parties to investigate acute or longterm problems and present their conclusions to the other members of the school community. The school management or a teacher returning from a stimulation INSET period may initiate a discussion on things that need improving. A school taking the initiative in the improvement process can operate on a planned basis, fix a number on INSET days to be spread out over a longer period, establish points of reference for the improvement process - staging posts for the evaluation of progress - and generally behave as systematically in its own improvement process as in the operation of other school activities.

A number of firm conclusions can be drawn on the strength of many of the systematic studies that have been made in the Nordic area of school development, as well as various international consultations on INSET and school development. To produce improvements in school, it seems that INSET has to be based on a very close knowledge of the local school, its individual members and its organisation. The more INSET "belongs" to the school staff, the greater its potential effect

seems to be. At the same time, many studies have shown that strong local "ownership" of improvements is not sufficient to guarantee the development of a school. In order for the improvement to materialise, the environment has to make distinct demands on the school and repeatedly demonstrate the weight behind those demands, at the same time lending support to the school's own efforts to improve. Considering that the local school occupies rather a pivotal position in the process of improvement, it seems natural that one should try to draw the most important conclusions about INSET and school development and then formulate them as recommendations to an individual school.

Recommendations to the local school

1. Make the process of improvement visible and important.

   Many observations have been reported to the effect that INSET and school development efforts are loosely organised and are planned without any long-term persepective. In order for INSET to be capable of producing improvement effects. the time and the work preserved for and devoted to INSET must be taken just as seriously as other time and other work in school. To prevent INSET and improvement from being overshadowed by the heavily organised business of teaching, it must be made quite clear in the individual school that this work also counts and means something. Teachers, for example, should be given the special task or function of directing their colleagues' INSET work.

2. A school needs to possess its own improvement process.

   There is widespread testimony that INSET will succeed when the school staff look on it as their own in-service education. The easiest way in which they can gain possession of their own INSET is by determining its content and organisation. But there is a problem here. Many studies have shown that improvement needs in school are not always discovered or perceived very well by people working there. They are liable to take too narrow a view of their own activities to be able to discover which things in school are most in need of change. School staff may also fight shy of the realisation that it is they who may need to improve their way of doing things, and consequently they may fight shy of improvement processes which perhaps come as a challenge to well-worn and previously very functional working patterns.

   Discussions as to which improvements may be initiated and what INSET may be required therefore have to be based on a broader foundation than just internal discussions by the school staff. More about this in point 3, below. Once the discussions within the school and between the school and others have taken place, however, it is essential for school staff to consider the next step, so that they themselves take charge of activities.

3. Base the improvement process on an evaluation of your own activities.

   Needs for improvement can be hard to detect. The great majority of people working in ordinary schools are very preoccupied with their lives in a small part of the school and have difficulty in perceiving the patterns and currents together making up the quality of the school, i.e. that which leaves its mark on the pupils' behaviour and development. To make this quality visible to the school staff, who are responsible for the activities, the evaluation has to proceed on systematic lines. Haphazard talks once or twice a year are not enough. Instead, studies need to be made of the way in which activities are conducted in different parts of the school and what they ultimately lead to, and even their effects after pupils have left school.

   Systematic evaluation means identifying similarities and dissimilarities between members of the school staff. Some teachers may prove to be more skilful than others when evaluation is also made to focus on the way in which adults cope with their work, and not just on the way in which the pupils have learned what the teachers have been trying to teach them. The work done by the adults, therefore, has to be scrutinised in order for INSET measures and improvement work to have any effect. A lot of the INSET presented today is addressed to all the members of a school. INSET can be more economically used by a school which dares to evaluate its own work inputs. The members of the school staff have different needs and therefore require different INSET inputs. Through systematic evaluation of the adults' work, the different inputs can be targeted on the right groups.

4. Base work for improvement on a knowledge of the way in which school improvement processes operate.

   Good professionals are distinguished by their good knowledge of their professional field. In order for improvement to work, a good knowledge of the way in which schools operate and of how they react to initiatives and demands for improvement. Some members of the school community need to track down this knowledge. Like other knowledge, it is partly concealed in the literature and in the minds of other professionals. There are a few syntheses in Nordic languages, e.g. Dalin (1987), Skyum-Nielsen (1987), Vasström (1985), Sandström and Ekholm (1985). Others are available in non-Nordic languages, e.g. van Velzen et al. (1985). And of course, one can also learn about school improvements by carrying them out oneself.

   The best foundation for a knowledge of school improvement is to be looked for in ideas concerning the true nature of the internal life of schools. Here again, just as in

other fields of inquiry, one can make a lot of headway by reading. There are several texts in Nordic Languages dealing with this field. e.g. Arfwedsson (1983), Berg and Wallin (1983 a and b), Ekholm and Fransson (1987). van Velzen et al (1985) contains a substantial overview of writings on the same subject in other languages.

5. Involve the school management.

Head teachers have an important part to play when a school is to be improved. They can set a good example which school staff will follow, as has been demonstrated in Sweden (Ekholm, Fransson and Lander, 1987). It has also been demonstrated that improvements progress very slowly, if at all, when school management dig their heels in and will not support the process (van Velzen et al., 1985). Head teachers are seldom able to transform a school staff single-handed, but by co-operating with members of staff or by unequivocally supporting those who are trying to get the improvement process under way, a head teacher can make important contributions to a school's improvement.

6. Plan improvement measures a long way ahead

Systematic studies of the kind of improvements that produce lasting effects have shown that one must be prepared for several years to pass before an improvement has fitted in with school activities and become part of the scenery (Miles and Seashore-Louis, 1987). The Nordic studies already quoted, in which the same schools were observed for considerable periods, have shown that improvements took a long time to materialise, insofar as they did so at all. INSET events and improvement work, therefore, need to be made part of slowacting plans. Planning need not be rigid, People in school know, quite certainly, that they will bave to deviate from their plan occasionally. But even if they do so, a plan can still be of service as a yardstick of the deviation. Accordingly, the plan needs to be put down in writing.

7. Document the improvement measures

Since improvement work tends to drag on rather, schools must also be prepared for people to leave the activities in midstream. If plans are put down in writing and made available to everybody in the school, this will make it easier for newcomers to carry on where others have left off. If the school records its own improvement activities, this will also provide school staff with a ready reference to show what progress they are making or not making. As we saw in the research overview, schools documenting their own history in the form of descriptions of their own improvment have less difficulty in seeing what lessons they have learned.

Through this in-house documentation, life in school can also be opened up to other people who may be interested in what is going on there, e.g. staff from other schools, parental groups, funding authorities. And when descriptions can be transmitted outwards, this also strengthens cohesion within the school. The nature of the school and its spirit are articulated by being described to the world at large.

8. Use many varieties of working procedure for INSET and improvement work.

There is nothing about the international consultations on teacher INSET within the OECD, the Council of Europe or the European Community to suggest the existence of just one or a few salutary working methods for INSET or improvement. Researchers have observed, however, that the routine distribution of information does not seem to provide school staff with an inducement for improving in-house activities. Accordingly, there is every reason for employing a wide diversity of procedures.

In order for school staff to find INSET engaging, they need to be presented with knowledge applicable to their own everyday work. Often such knowledge is not <u>given</u> but has to be hunted down. Working procedures in which school staff themselves investigate or experiment, thereby personally <u>producing</u> knowledge, help them to hunt down the knowledge they need.

When it is decided at a school to offer teachers the chance of <u>consuming</u> knowledge, it may be appropriate to invest in consumption involving as much activity as possible on the part of the person who is to do the learning. Sitting in the school hall and listening to a lecture is the least active form of cognitive consumption and may therefore be presumed to result in the least retention. Consuming knowledge by joining other teachers in reading, reflecting on what has been read and evaluation will result in greater retention. In connection with this type of active cognitive consumption, a meeting with the author of the book can enhance learning.

In the course of their own INSET, school staff seldom work on the <u>dissemination</u> of knowledge. This procedure, which involves teachers codifying existing knowledge, be it theoretical or practical, and expressing it in such a way that others are able to consume it, can also result in good retention. Schools today have such advanced technology at their disposal in the form of reproduction apparatus, video equipment and computers, that a more media-like dissemination of knowledge is perfectly feasible. Usually, a very high level of retention can be

achieved among those teachers who assume active responsibility for shaping the message to be transmitted. In order, however, for this working procedure to be genuinely worth while, a school may need to join forces with other schools in creating some kind of forum for the dissemination of knowledge. This may take the form of an exchange and mart for video productions or a joint magazine on school improvement.

INSET need not take place at specially reserved times with everybodytaking part in the same activity. For some people in school, INSET may take the form of other duties for a period of time, e.g. changing groups with another teacher or trying a supervisory or investigative assignment in the school or a municipality. INSET time can be spread out so as to make it possible to learn from the practical experience of others and so as to help teachers to transcend the boundaries of their individual classrooms. To be able to improve, one may need to see other people in action, observe how they do things and discuss with them why their methods differ from one's own. If all INSET takes place at once, this deprives teachers of the opportunity of learning about their profession by watching others practise it.

9. Search for improvement support.

There are many kinds of support for improvement measures in school. The municipality, the county or the State reserves money which the school can compete for. This money is awarded to the school for the improvement of its own activities. There are officials in various places who have had experience of solving the very problems which a school may be facing, and these officials are not always to be found in the school sector. Sometimes, indeed, they may be located in that sector but at a different school. To obtain help in its work of improvement, a school needs to find out where help is available. Help will not come of its own accord, partly for the simple reason that the help needed by the individual school is not a matter of general knowledge.

Universities, university colleges and INSET agencies have specialities to offer school staff. In order for members of the individual school to get as much as possible out of this kind of help, it is important that they engage in a dialogue with the INSET specialists and that they have a hand in deciding what a particular form of INSET is actually to contain and also the best way of planning it in response to the needs of the individual school. INSET specialists are capable of customising their inputs to suit the individual school; this is where their professional acumen comes into its own.

10. Form networks with other schools.

Many schools behave as if they were the only ones in the world with improvement requirements. To put its own method of solving local and more general problems into perspective, a school can try to establish contact with other schools involved in much the same work of improvement. Experience of inter-school co-operation in networks of different kinds has been encouraging the world over. This has been demonstrated, not least, by the inter-school co-operation established under the aegis of the Nordic Council of Ministers (Ekholm, 1986).

Staff taking part in a network which involves several schools may need to visit one anothers's schools and study activities there. By switching duties they can obtain an outside view of their own solutions. The encounter with a different perspective may help the individual school to formulate its problems differently, perhaps in a way which will spur the improvement process. If colleagues from other schools visit one's own school to admire the solution adopted there, one may feel encouraged to pay return visits. Active observation visits to other schools may confer an insight into alternatives which actually work elsewhere and might be worth testing in one's own school.

Geographically, schools with which one wishes to establish connection may be near at hand or far away. To trace each other, different schools must perhaps bring themselves to "advertise" for like-minded establishments. This can be done by taking part in conferences attended by many schools or by writing about one's school and its efforts for improvement in teachers' journals, at the same time taking the opportunity of inviting others to co-operate. In countries with efficient regional education authorities, of course, schools can look to this quarter for active assistance in the establishment of local or regional inter-school networks.

Implications for employers and INSET specialists

The conclusions and recommendations I have now presented have a whole number of implications for school proprietors - the municipality and the State - and for the specialists active within the organisations whose tasks include supporting schools in their work of improvement.

One of the first implications concerns the way in which one may have to consider funding allocations for improvement work in schools. As has already been made clear, it is very difficult to decide how improvement work or INSET activity is to be planned so as to maximise its effect. For this reason it may be advisable not to tie funding

allocations for improvement work to particular working procedures but instead to require schools themselves to indicate the procedure they propose to adopt. In order to decide the degree of financial support which schools are to receive, it is appropriate for an employer to start with point 8, above, and to award extra support to schools adopting working procedures which may conceivably result in school staff tracking down new knowledge.

When employers need to organise INSET of a central nature, e.g. in connection with a school reform, it is essential that they be quite clear about the improvements they are demanding in schools. It is also essential, when selecting working procedures for central INSET, to adopt procedures whereby school staff will work actively to acquire knowledge, instead of being placed in a passive consumer situation. And in order for central INSET to have a proper impact, the centre of the schools system must be prepared for a long implementation period.

One conclusion to be drawn from our knowledge of the way in which school improvements proceed is that the employer must actively assist schools in evaluating their own activites and efforts at improvement. To be able to take part in a discussion of the way in which improvement and INSET measures are to be planned, the employer needs to have procured information on the workings of the local school. Evaluation of schools as units is particularly important in this connection. Most schools in the Nordic countries are closely familiar with evaluation but only as regards pupils' achievements. Usually they are unaccustomed to evaluation the work of adults in school and they may therefore need a great deal of help and support, but there must also be firm insistence on evaluation materialising.

In this connection employers and INSET specialists can offer direct inputs to assist the evaluation of schools, and they can compile digests of available knowledge on the procedure for evaluating entire schools. Isolated examples from the state of studies on school development include practically useful instruments and procedures for evaluation schools (cf. Ekholm, Fransson and Lander, 1987). As part of the OECD project on school improvement work, two technical reports have been compiled, based on existing knowledge concerning the procedure which can be adopted in evaluating individual schools (Hopkins, 1985 and 1987).

In order for the above recommendations to schools in the Nordic countries to be capable of producing the intended effects, the INSET specialists will have to offer schools overviews and training on the experience and thinking which have been accumulated concerning the way in which individual schools are structured and how they usually develop.

Employers and INSET specialists need to act in such a way that schools will have abundant opportunities of presenting their own improvement activities. In many parts of the Nordic area today there are only a small number of fora where a school can proudly present its improvement activities. There are fewer still where schools can demonstrate and discuss bids for improvement that have not succeeded. The few journals existing in our countries are insufficient for schools to be able to present their experiences. In order for INSET and improvement to provide enduring lessons, schools must have good reason to document their activities. One good reason of this kind would be the existing of interesting fora to which to contribute.

Employers and INSET specialists can also help such fora to materialise by bluntly insisting that schools record their activities. They can also lend added impetus to documentation by looking for other modes of presentation instead of elaborate periodicals, e.g. by initiation electronic networks through which schools can maintain open communications over the telecommunications network and from their own computers, or by undertaking to organise an exchange of video products between schools adopting this method of presenting their improvement activities. Once communication links of this kind have been established between the schools, it will be easier for an employer to support the establishment of inter-school networks. This perhaps is where electronic networks have the most interesting possibilities. They can be used for rapid conversation between districts a long way apart, while at the same time encouraging well-prepared meetings.

One final implication of my review of out knowledge concerning the way in which INSET and improvement work is to be conducted to produce the effects intended emerges from the fifth of my recommendations above. Employers constitute the school management no less than the local head teacher. In order for the work of improvement to have an impact, the employer needs to demonstrate support for the school. An employer taking the initiatives outlined above and making important resources available demonstrates support by so doing. Support, however, is demonstrated not only by awarding a school funds for its improvement work, but also by confronting the school with challenging demands for improvement, demands based on sound practical knowledge, e.g. in the light of close evaluation. Support is also demonstrated when a school is awarded funds for improvement as a result of efforts to identify the most appropriate improvement measures.

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